

fectingly to be observed that a baneful excess in drinking distilled spiritous liquors, is prevalent amongst many of the inhabitants of our land; how evident are the corrupting, debasing and ruinous effects consequent upon the importation, distillation and retailing of them; whereby intemperance is greatly aided and encouraged to the impoverishment of many, distempers the constitutions and understandings of many more; and increasing vice and dissoluteness in the land; with which many religiously attentive minds have been long painfully exercised.

It is earnestly desired that Friends, in all quarters, may be excited to suffer the affecting importance of this evil religiously to impress their minds; and Monthly Meetings are directed to labour in the spirit of love, in order to convince those of our members of the impropriety of their conduct, who may be engaged in importing, distilling, vending of or trading in distilled spiritous liquors, as an article of drink, or who use it as a common drink themselves, or hand it out for that purpose to others. And if after Monthly Meetings shall have patiently laboured with such as continue in either of these practices, they cannot be prevailed upon to desist from the same, such meetings are left at liberty to disown them.

Proceeding against those who transgress.

NEGROES AND SLAVES.

As a religious society we have found it to be our indispensable duty to declare to the world, our belief of the repugnancy of slavery to the christian religion. It therefore remains to be our continued concern to prohibit our members from holding in bondage our fellow-men. And at the

Testimony against slave-ry.

NEGROES AND SLAVES.

present time, we apprehend it to be incumbent on every individual, deeply to consider his own particular share in this testimony. The slow progress in the emancipation of this part of the human family we lament; but nevertheless do not despair of their ultimate enlargement. And we desire that Friends may not suffer the deplorable condition of these, our enslaved fellow-beings, to lose its force upon their minds through the delay, which the opposition of the interested may occasion, in this work of justice and mercy; but rather be animated to consider, that the longer the opposition remains, the greater is the necessity on the side of righteousness and benevolence, for our steady perseverance in pleading their cause.

Let us also amidst our sympathy for the sufferers, not forget to cultivate those sensations which direct the mind in pity towards the deplorable state of those men, whether in foreign countries or our own, who promote, procure and execute the tearing away of the Africans from their native land; as well as for those who detain them in bondage. Let us, therefore, seek for and cherish that disposition of mind, which can pray for these enemies of humanity, and fervently breathe for their restoration to soundness of judgment and purity of principle.

In relation to the descendants of the African race, we earnestly desire, that those who may be under the care of any of our members, may be treated with kindness; and as objects of the common salvation, instructed in the principles of the christian religion, as well as in such branches of school-learning as may fit them for freedom, and to become useful members of civil society. Also that Friends in their respective neighbourhoods, advise and assist those who are at liberty, in the

Commission to those who are involved in the very or slave trade.

Treatment of the African race in friends families.

education of their children, and common worldly concerns.

If any in membership with us should hire slaves, or should take as apprentices or servants slaves who are to be returned to their alleged owners, after a term of years, or limited time; or shall purchase slaves to be liberated at any time after the ages of eighteen for females and twenty-one years for males; or act as executors or administrators to estates where slaves are thus bequeathed; or be accessory to any step whereby their bondage may be continued, beyond the term above limited; however they may be induced thereto from an apparent motive of contributing to the cause of humanity, it is our judgment, that such countenance the injustice of slavery, and oppose our testimony against it: they ought, therefore, to be speedily treated with, in the spirit of love and wisdom, in order to convince them of the iniquity of their conduct, and if, after christian labour, they cannot be brought to such a sense of their injustice as to do whatever the Monthly Meeting shall judge right in the case, and condemn their deviation from the law of righteousness and equity, to the satisfaction of the said meeting; they ought to be disowned, as other transgressors are, for immoral, unjust and reproachful conduct.

The situation of those of the African race, who have been held as slaves by any of us or our predecessors, calls for our serious examination and inquiry, how far we are clear of withholding from them what, under such an exercise, may be opened to our view, as their just right; and we earnestly and affectionately intreat those in particular, who have released any of them, to attend to the further manifestations of duty. Even if no such obligations to this people existed amongst us, it is

Attention to what may be further opened on this subject.

OATHS.

worthy of our consideration, whether any object of beneficence is more deserving of our regard, than that of training up their youth in such virtuous principles and habits, as may render them useful and respectable members of the community.

OATHS.

Our testimony against the imposition of oaths is founded upon the following express and positive command of the Author of the Christian religion: viz: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black; but let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matt. v. 33 to 37.

This testimony we also find was clearly held up, and emphatically enjoined by the apostle James, upon his christian brethren. "But above all things my brethren," says he, "swear not; neither by heaven; neither by the earth; neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." Jas. v. 12.

Believing therefore, that no argument can invalidate prohibitions thus clear and positive, we are bound religiously to regard them; and whilst we feel gratitude for the continuance of that indulgence by which our affirmation is accepted; let us

Scripture testimony against.

Ought to be respected.

evince our sincerity in relation to this testimony, by faithfully maintaining it.

And when any of our members, either in courts or elsewhere, violate it, either by taking or administering oaths; Monthly Meetings are desired to extend brotherly labour towards them; and if they cannot be prevailed upon to give the necessary satisfaction, to disown them.

We also believe that a proper regard to the obligations of this testimony, would lead our members to endeavour to procure persons as witnesses to instruments of writing, who will attest them by affirmation.

OVERSEERS.

It is the recommendation and desire of the Yearly Meeting, as productive of very beneficial consequences to society, that in every Monthly Meeting, a proper number of judicious men and women Friends, belonging to each of the Particular or Preparative Meetings, be appointed to the station of overseers within the same: whose duty it shall be, to exercise a vigilant and tender care over their fellow-members, that if any thing repugnant to the harmony and good order of the society appear amongst them, it may be timely attended to. And to prevent the introduction of all unnecessary and premature complaints to meetings of business, it is advised, that if any member shall have cause of complaint against another, it be mentioned to the overseers, who are to see that the party complained of has been treated with according to gospel order, previously to the case being reported to the Preparative or Monthly Meeting. And it is desired, that in treating

Appointment and duty of.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

with any, it be done in meekness and love, patiently endeavouring to instruct and advise them, which, if ineffectual, the Preparative Meeting should be informed thereof, that if needful, the case may be laid before the Monthly Meeting, of which notice should be given to the party when it can be conveniently done.

It is further recommended to our Monthly Meetings, that a committee be appointed at least once in three years, or as much oftener as the occasion may require, to consider the propriety of changing the overseers, and bringing forward to the improvement of their gifts, other Friends, on whom a concern for the welfare of the society may rest. And we tenderly exhort all our members, who may be rightly called unto this, or any other service of the church, not hastily to excuse themselves therefrom; but seriously to consider the advice of the apostle, "Feed the flock of God, which is among you; taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

Provision for changing them.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

As next to our own souls, our offspring are the very immediate objects of our care and concern, we intreat all who are parents and governors of families, that they lay to heart, the great and lasting importance to the youth, of a religious education. This would lead them to be solicitous, that their tender and susceptible minds may be impressed with virtuous principles, and a just sense of the Divine Being, his wisdom, goodness, power and omnipresence. They should be concerned to impress them, with just sentiments in relation

Duty of parents.

to the vanity and fallacy of transitory enjoyments; directing them to seek after that peace and serenity of mind attendant upon true religion, as the pearl of great price.

The importance of an early instruction in the law of righteousness is set forth with peculiar strength, clearness and solemnity in Dent. vi. 4, &c. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; and these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." We know that virtue does not descend by lineal succession, nor piety by inheritance, yet we trust that the Almighty graciously regards the sincere endeavours of those parents, whose early and unremitting care is over their offspring for good. Be ye therefore examples to them, in your meetings, your families and employments. Keep them while young, out of the vain fashions, the corrupt customs and unprofitable conversation of the world; labouring to convince their young and tender minds of the propriety of restraint when necessary; exhorting them in meekness, and commanding in wisdom. And as they advance in age guard them against the reading of plays, romances and other licentious publications, of a nature prejudicial to the promotion of christianity; likewise against public pastimes and pernicious diversions; all which have a tendency to draw the incautious mind from a sense of religious duty, to bring it into a state of alienation from the Divine life, and to deprive it of that inexpressible comfort and de-

Importance of early instruction.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

light attendant upon the daily exercise of religion and virtue.

In much love to the rising generation, we exhort them, to avoid the many vanities and ensnaring corruptions, to which they are exposed. Bear in mind, dear young people, that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Take the advice of godly parents, guardians and friends; ever remembering, that children ought to obey their parents in the Lord; and that disobedience therein is a breach of the moral law, and was always offensive in the divine sight.

With tender solicitude, we press it upon you, flee from every thing which may have a tendency to dispoil you of your innocence, and to render your minds less obedient to that holy influence, which your enlightened judgment demonstrates to be truth. We beseech you, attend to this heavenly instructor, and dutifully yield to the correspondent tender advice of your friends. Shrink not from the cross of Christ, in your garb, language or manners, but through a subjection of your wills to the divine will, in these, and all other respects, walk answerably to the purity of our profession, and the simplicity and spirituality of our worship; that you may be instructive examples to serious inquirers after truth; and not of those, who under a profession thereof, are preferring their own evil ways, and turning others aside from the footsteps of its followers.

When the pious exercise of parental care and authority is disregarded, and any of our youth departing from that simplicity correspondent with our profession, have obstinately run into, and copied after the vain and extravagant fashions of the world, in their dress and address, and have also

To avoid ensnaring corruptions.

And not to shrink from the cross.

Consequence of disregarding instruction.